

INCIDENTS AT UNITED STATES-MEXICAN BORDER SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BILBRAY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing the 49th District of California. I also happen to have the privilege of living in the southwestern corner of the United States, where the Pacific Ocean meets the Mexican border. Sad to say, I also happen to have to represent an area that is severely impacted by intrusion and incursions across the Mexican border, not only of illegal immigration, but those individuals that cross the border to perpetuate crime and theft.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is not just those of unorganized crime or organized crime, but the problem is actually of those who are invested with government authority in Mexico, participating in a program of theft and violence against the people of the United States and those in San Diego County.

This photo here is a good example of the problem. This is a federal Mexican police officer driving a United States stolen car, without even having the wherewithal to bother to take off the California license plate that was on the vehicle. This vehicle is stolen, and identified by the Federal agents as stolen, and still is being used on official business for Mexico's Government.

Now, this week we had a situation that I think has to be brought to attention here in Washington, D.C. Mr. Speaker, this week two Mexican Federal agents crossed over into United States territory at the port of entry and actually stopped members of the United States, citizens of the United States, with AK-47 weapons in their possession and took those individuals, tried to forcibly take those individuals back into Mexico. Our United States agents confronted them with their weapons drawn, and for a moment there was actually a standoff between Mexican Federal agents on United States soil and American Federal agents on United States soil, point-blank range, ready to have a shoot-out.

Thank the powers above that we did not have a tragedy here. But we did have a situation that really calls for attention, and that is the fact that U.S. citizens were ready to be forced off of U.S. territory by agents of a foreign government, with weapons, I want to point out, that are illegal, not only to be imported into this country but to be possessed in this country, and that is a fully automatic AK-47.

Now, the Mexican Attorney General has said these people are going to be handled, and our Government has turned them back over to Federal agents to be taken to Mexico City. I certainly want everyone in this capital and in Mexico City to recognize this Member will be watching this quite closely, along with my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, not only did that happen, but in the City of Coronado an individual was arrested who has been identified as being a state police officer in the act of stealing a vehicle from my district to export it to Mexico. Now, let us be frank. A lot of us support free trade, but this is not the type of free trade I or my constituents support. If we are going to export cars, we would like it to be paid for first.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that an interesting side note to this incidence at the border is the car that was being driven by the Mexican officials who tried to take the American citizens across the border was not only found to have alcohol and drugs in it, but actually happened to be a stolen American car being driven in this act.

Now, there was other instances that have occurred, again this week, where there were two individuals who identified themselves as being dealers for officials on the Mexican side who were Government officials, and they were being paid and reimbursed for that theft.

Mr. Speaker, this is another incident of the situation that our border is out of control. I am not speaking against the people of Mexico or their Government, as much as the fact that there are problems within their Government that we must insist be corrected.

There have been successes. I would like to announce that the State of Baja California Sur has cooperated with the United States, identified 300 cars for investigation, and actually have identified that 75 of those 300 cars are in fact stolen American cars. They have cooperated with U.S. officials, and those cars are now going to be returned to their rightful owners.

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So there are successes, but the problem is that we have recognized a situation here to where we not only have crime crossing the border, but we have crime and violence crossing the border under the guise of government authority.

When my police officers in Coronado stop a car burglar and stop them in the act, I think it is quite inappropriate for my police officers to be greeted with a Mexican badge that says, you have to release me because I am a Mexican official.

Well, thank God our police officers do not play by that game. I will ask all my colleagues to pay attention to this issue, Mr. Speaker, and that this Nation pay attention. And I hope that we send a message to the White House and to Mexico City that these things have to stop now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NETHERCUTT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear

hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues in the House about the very important issues facing our senior citizens. This has been a very senior-sensitive 104th Congress, and I am proud to say that under the leadership of individuals on both sides of the aisle we have been able to accomplish some very good things.

Most notably, we have been able to raise the income eligibility for those seniors under 70 who want to have income above \$11,280 and earn it. Under our new legislation, they will be able to make up to \$30,000 a year over the next 5 years without it being deducted from the Social Security.

In addition, we have rolled back the very unfair 1993 Clinton tax increase on Social Security. In addition, we have instituted the \$500 elder care tax credit and the tax credit for the purchase of long-term care health insurance.

Now that brings us to the issue that was raised by my colleague and friend, Congressman BRYANT of Tennessee, about Medicare. We, in the Congress, want to do all we can to make sure we preserve and protect it for the 32 million of our Nation's senior citizens and 4 million persons with disabilities. But the Medicare spending, as you know, has gone up between 10 and 11 percent a year, whereas in the private sector health care is about a 4 to 5 percent increase a year, which tells many of us in Congress and those also watching to see what we will do that there really has been a great deal of fraud, abuse and waste in the system. If we do not take action to save Medicare, Mr. Speaker, by the year 2002, the Medicare portion of the FICA taxes for everyone will be raised 125 percent from the current level.

Seniors will face an increase in their annual premiums. We can stop that by preserving, protecting and improving our Medicare by making sure we control the rate of growth and also look to innovations with possibilities of the medical savings accounts and with managed care.

Last year we have seen that the Social Security Medicare board of trustees projected that the part A of the trust fund, the hospital care portion, would go broke by 1996. The trustees, who included Labor Secretary Robert

Reich, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, and then Secretary Lloyd Bentsen of the Treasury, all members of the Clinton cabinet, said:

The federal hospital insurance trust fund, which pays inpatient hospital expenses, will be able to pay for only about seven years and is severely out of financial balance in the long range.

The trustees, therefore, have logically called for prompt, effective and decisive action to save the fund from its own insolvency. As well the bipartisan commission on entitlement and tax reform, headed by Senator BOB KERREY and Senator John Danforth came to the same conclusion.

This impending disaster only came to light very recently. The Clinton administration had tried to sweep it under the rug. His fiscal year 1996 budget proposes no changes or solutions to Medicare's problems, and he even did not bring that up when he had the White House Conference on Aging. It was not even addressed by him.

As Medicare travels the road toward bankruptcy, President Clinton has been AWOL, absent without leadership, on this issue. He has even refused to participate in a bipartisan effort to save Medicare. Not until the Republicans had come forward to talk openly and honestly about how we can save, preserve and protect Medicare has the problem been described and the options been discussed.

House Republicans are determined to work with House Democrats to save Medicare by using new approaches, new management, new technologies to improve it, preserve it and protect it. Congress has an unprecedented opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to undertake a fundamental reform of this important Medicare Program.

One of the steps many of us are taking are Medicare preservation task forces, where we have senior citizens, people involved with AARP, RSVP, groups across our country like my own in Montgomery, Pennsylvania to make sure we include seniors in the solution. Seniors need to be served. We want to make sure we hear from them about options on making sure we protect it not only for seniors now but for generations to come.

The General Accounting Office has estimated that there is \$44 billion that is wasted on fraud and abuse in the Medicare and the Medicaid funds. As much as 30 cents of every \$1 is simply wasted or lost due to mismanagement.

House Republicans will increase Medicare spending under our proposal from \$4,700 per retiree to as much as \$6,300 per retiree by 2002. This is a 45-percent increase in Medicare spending per retiree.

We will preserve the current Medicare system but we need to develop a new series of options for our senior citizens so they can control their own future. I believe that by working together both sides of the aisle we can save Medicare, preserve and protect it

so that we can provide the best possible health care at the lowest cost to our senior citizens so they can control their destiny. And we working together with them, we will in fact have a bright future.

TIMBER SALVAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. TAYLOR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, we are here today to talk about the Presidential veto of the timber rescission or timber salvage amendment that is part of the rescission package that has passed this House, passed the Senate, has been confirmed, from the conferees, by the House and is waiting confirmation in the Senate.

The President has promised to veto the entire rescission package, and that includes the timber salvage amendment. The salvage amendment was put together after considerable consultation with the Forest Service, with many groups; in fact, the final amendment reflected a good many suggestions from the White House itself, and still the White House wishes to veto the entire rescission package, including the timber amendment.

What we are talking about with the timber amendment tonight is to tell people what is going to be the result of that Presidential veto. First of all, we have to look at what is happening to our forests and what is happening to the jobs related to forest harvesting. Our forests are deteriorating in health because we are not managing them along the lines of our best scientific knowledge in forests. We have a well-funded special interest of environmental groups in Washington that take in over \$600 million, and they take in that money by scaring people into thinking the last tree is going to be cut tomorrow or some other fantasy in order to bring those hundreds of millions of dollars in to themselves. This does not meet with true science or with what is actually happening in the forest.

The forests are deteriorating because of the bad management that has been pushed by these organizations creating the policy over the last several years.

The salvage amendment was an effort to try to return sensible environmentalism and sensible science back to the harvest of our timber. And what else is at stake? Is it better environmental policy for us not to harvest dead and dying wood in our forests, to lose tens of thousands of jobs because we do not allow that harvest, to make the people of our country have to use alternative resources other than wood? And what is the consequence of using alternative resources other than wood?

We will make this podium, these chairs, this table out of either wood,

metal or plastic. If we make them out of plastic, then we have to import the oil from the Middle East. We have to fight to get it out, many times. We spill it several times along the way. The toxicity in the manufacturing is greater than it is in wood manufacturing. And it is much harder to recycle or to dispose of when its usefulness is over.

The same thing with metal. We dig it from the ground. A great deal of energy in the smelting process, and it is much harder to recycle than is the renewable resource of wood. Also, both of those items are finite resources; when they are gone, they are gone.

The renewable resource of wood managed on a perpetual yield basis can take our lands, our best suited lands for timber and grow over and over again the multitude of products that we need for all of our home products, paper, many resources that otherwise we would have to use finite resources.

Now, it is better for us to use the renewable resource of wood or use up our finite resources?

We are today importing over one-third of the timber that we need, over 16 billion board feet. Often this is harvested from far more sensitive environmental areas than we have available to us in the United States.

So by forcing these imports, we are damaging tropical rain forests in many cases and other more sensitive parts of land.

What we tried to do with the timber amendment, a bipartisan amendment that had the support of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, the United Paperworkers International Union, Western Council of Industrial Workers, National Association of Home Builders, Realtors, Women in Timber and many other small business organizations. It was to craft language that would provide us with 59,000 more jobs during the three years in the timber communities. It would bring in an additional \$2 billion in payroll for timber workers in communities all over this country. It would provide over \$450 million in additional tax revenue, and it would put over \$423 million returned to the Treasury directly. Two hundred three million dollars would be shared with the counties, mostly going to education, which is where the counties put funds coming from the harvest of timber.

It would also bring us a lower cost in fighting forest fires, which utilized \$1 billion in Federal cost in 1994 and cost us 32 lives in this country fighting fire.

The President plans to veto this bill, the entire rescission bill and the timber salvage provision. That would put people back to work, reduce expenditures on forest fires, and improve forest health.

Included also was section 318 timber. Many people have said that the timber salvage bill is not needed because the Government has a process now for harvesting salvaged timber. It does. But it has been used in such a way by many organizations through the appeals